



New leadership training underway

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The success of leadership programs such as [Leadership New Mexico](#) and [Leadership Los Alamos](#) has spurred the creation of another such program: [Northern Heritage Leadership Institute](#) (NHLI).

Held at the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area headquarters in Alcalde, the program is open to anyone interested in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos counties.

More than 50 residents are enrolled in the course, which began in January and takes place over four weekends through April. “We were hoping to reach 35 participants and were surprised by the number of applications submitted,” says organizer Christopher Madrid. “We did not want to say ‘no’ to anyone.”

“We were completely amazed by the size and diversity of the turnout of the community members who brought so much passion, pride, and good energy to the forum,” adds Rio Arriba Deputy County Commissioner David F. Trujillo. “Each participant shared his or her own story from the heart, which served as a great team-building exercise.”

Members of the Rio Arriba Sheriffs Department attend the first weekend of the Northern Heritage Leadership Institute.

During the program, participants are connected with community and state leaders and also given the resources and skills to be influential area leaders. The takeaway for participants will be “a sense of community; tools to become more effective citizens; and leadership skills that will make them more effective at home, at work and in society,” according to Madrid.

“It is awesome to be in a room with other leaders who have the same vision for our community,” says participant Liz Abeyta, who is also the director of the Adult Education Program at Northern New Mexico College. “I hope that participants in this leadership institute will formulate actual plans that, in time, will yield tangible solutions to the issues at hand.”

Another major goal of NHLI is to “train the trainer”—in other words, to “develop our own ongoing program as a community,” Madrid explains. “Already we have smaller communities asking if we can take a version of such training to offer their citizens.”

With sponsorship from many committed community organizations (including Rio Arriba County, the City of Española, Northern New Mexico College, [Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area](#), [Rural Communities Assistance Corporation](#), Regional

Development Corporation, and the Laboratory's Community Partnerships Office), NHLI is expected to happen again in 2018—and beyond.

One impetus of the Northern Heritage Leadership Institute is the Rio Arriba County Leadership Summit, which has been held in the Valley for the past two years and includes many community leaders, such as RAC Commissioner Barney Trujillo, Laboratory Director Charlie McMillan, RAC Commissioner Alex Naranjo (pictured).

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